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Madame, Mother of the Regent, 1652-1722. By ARVÈDE BARINE. Translated by JEANNE MAIRET (Madame Charles Bigot). (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1909. Pp. xi, 346.)

THE lady, who wrote under the name of Arvède Barine, has published several works in reference to the French court in the days of Louis XIV. In the last of them she reviews the career of Madame, Mother of the Regent, who married the brother of Louis XIV., and for more than fifty years was a prominent member of the society, whose centre was Versailles, and the cynosure of whose eyes was Louis XIV.

This book does not profess to be a serious historical work, and we cannot expect in it the strict and accurate scholarship that would be demanded in a history of a different kind. It is just, however, to say that Madame Vincens was thoroughly familiar with the period and had studied most of the memoirs and correspondence which have to do with her heroine.

A heroine, indeed, the Duchess of Orleans never was, not even to a biographer. She was a daughter of Carl Ludwig, Elector Palatine, a prince of by no means an exalted character, and she received the training of a petty German court. Probably, not even in Europe at that period, was it possible to have a worse one. For such a personage the great problem of life was marriage, and Charlotte, Countess Palatine of the Rhine, was fortunate or unfortunate enough, to make what, in those days, was regarded as a great alliance. At the age of nineteen she was married to the Duke of Orleans, the younger brother of Louis XIV., and she occupied a distinguished position in the court, which was then regarded as the political as well as the social centre of Europe. Her husband was a very poor personage, and their long married life was attended by about the amount of unhappiness that was found in most similar alliances.

This work pays little heed to the political history of the time, but it gives a fairly accurate picture of the curious society in which Madame was a great personage. The story is pleasantly told, it is gossipy, and much of the gossip is interesting. Madame was one of the most prolific letter-writers the world has ever known, all her life long she was constantly sending off voluminous epistles to her German relatives; they contain a prodigious amount of gossip and a good deal of interesting information.

The splendor and the discomfort of the life at Versailles, the unwearied pursuit of amusement, the virtues and vices of those who formed the court of Louis XIV., in which it is to be feared the vices predominated, are related in the correspondence which furnishes the most important material for the life of the writer. Madame writes of sitting in her room at Versailles with a fur about her neck and her feet in a bear-skin bag and shaking with the cold. She describes the routine of her own days at the Palais Royal. They got up at half past ten and went to mass at twelve, after which they gossiped. It

is to be feared the gossip sometimes interfered with the service. Another duchess, one of Madame's German kinspeople, complains that she cannot finish her letter in church, because the duke is making such a noise reading aloud a comedy. Even in France, if the manners were better, the devotion was no more sincere. At two the members of the household went to the table and there they were until half past five. It was a time of heavy eating and heavy drinking. Louis XIV. ate amounts that seem to us appalling, and though Madame abused French dishes, she partook profusely of them. After dinner visitors strolled in, sometimes there was an opera, and almost always there was gambling. It could not be called a refined society, but its records are not without interest, and the history of any social life, whether more or less edifying, has its value.

There are inaccuracies in this book and some exaggerations. The condition of the Palatinate was bad in the seventeenth century, but our author is wrong in saying that there could be found there cook-houses exclusively devoted to human flesh, and that cannibalism was prevalent. The errors are not of large importance.

On the whole, this book gives a fair account of the career of a woman who held an important place in the world, and who was an active-minded and not an uninfluential personage.

JAMES BRECK PERKINS.

Mirabeau and the French Revolution. In three volumes. By FRED MORROW FLING, Ph.D., Professor of European History in the University of Nebraska. Volume I. *The Youth of Mirabeau.* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1908. Pp. xv, 497.)

THIS book is the work of an historian whose standard of scholarship is of the highest and whose critical methods are thoroughly scientific. He has had access to all the material which could assist him in procuring a complete knowledge of his subject, has rigorously criticized his sources, and has formed his own judgments. He has consequently produced a scholarly and conscientious study of great merit:

It is extremely difficult to write the story of Mirabeau's youth. Almost all the evidence we possess in regard to it comes either from himself, from his father, or from his uncle, and therefore it is unreliable. Not only so, but it is inadequate. There are many questions to which this material furnishes no answer. Again, we find a difficulty in the character of all the witnesses. There is only one who is thoroughly trustworthy—the *bailli*. In his judgments drawn from this material, it is not to be expected that Fling will always be right, and he is not. He is at his best when he treats of the relations between father and son. Here, on the whole, his method is certain and his conclusions are sound. His use of sources is well illustrated by his attitude towards Montigny's